

Patrika

Chinmaya Mission Los Angeles

SEPTEMBER 2014

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**CHINMAYA MISSION
LOS ANGELES**

Vedanta, Wisdom, Spiritual Growth

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Over Thirty Years Of Service To Humanity



Upcoming Events

Valmiki Ramayan Discourse Series with Swami Ishwaranandaji	Oct 6-10	6:30 am - 7:30 pm 7:30 pm - 8:30 pm
New Parents' Orientation with Swami Ishwaranandaji	Oct 18	4:00 pm
Just For Seniors	Oct 23	9:00 am - 4:00 pm
Inauguration of Annashektra Annakoot Celebrations	Oct 25	
Ganapaty Pooja, Punyaavacanam & Navagraha Pooja		8:00 am - 10:00 am
Annashektra Opening Ceremony		10:15 am
Sri Lakshmi Puja		10:30 am - 11:00 am
Bhajans		11:00 am - 11:30 am
Message from Acharyas		11:30 am - 12:00 pm
Aarti & Mahaprasad		12:00 pm

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Thus Spake The Master

We choose our Joys and Sorrows...

...long before we experience them.

- Swami Chinmayananda

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THINK!

Dive Deep to Discover

Rhythm enhances music not voice

Earth supports the tree, not the roots

Vehicles move by fuel, not by just wheels

Only devotion supports Dharma, not rules

Cries the heart in emotion, not the eyes

Space carries clouds not the air

Intellect doesn't, wisdom speaks through saints

Dive deep to discover, do not just surf in life!

- Swami Ishwarananda

For e-Satsang blog, click [here](#)

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CMLA's Raas Garba Draws Community in Large Numbers

Chinmaya Mission Los Angeles drew huge crowds to its 13th Navaratri Raas Garba event, held on Sept.27 at the University High School in Irvine.



The evening began with prayers to Devi Maa, conducted by the head acharya of CMLA, Swami Ishwarananda.

Over 1,300 colorfully dressed participants, children and adults, enjoyed the evening, dancing and meeting friends. The live music was provided by Jayshree Gohil and Party. The young participated in some energetic moves on the dance floor while the older dancers exhibited some sedate movements. There were also several seniors present who seemed to just enjoy being there, soaking in the laughter and music that surrounded them.



When tired, the dancers rushed off to enjoy refreshments being served in the stalls outside. At the conclusion, aarati was performed with attendees saying they looked forward to the next year's event!

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San Gabriel BV Children Mark Navaratri With Golu

The nine day worship of the mother goddess at San Gabriel balavihar had everyone participating. Children learned about Devi's various manifestations and observed the Saraswati puja, bringing in items of learning and importance to them to set at her feet. A 'golu' was set up with families bringing in the dolls and children learning the significance of what it means. Special prasad was shared by all at the end of prayers and aarati.



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Kala Ramnath Delights Discerning Music Lovers in SoCal

Kalanjali hosted yet another musical treat at Rameshwaram on Sept 14. This time, it was a mesmerizing Hindustani violin concert by the maestro Kala Ramnath, accompanied on the tabla by the percussion legend Abhijit Banerjee. The concert was an uninterrupted 100 minutes in duration with the audience enjoying every minute of the singing violin through the dancing fingers of Ramnath with Banerjee's fingers dancing elegantly on the tabla, often times singing back to Ramnath's violin.



Kala Ramnath who hails from a legendary musical family was mentored by her aunt, the renowned violinist Dr. N. Rajam and has benefited from a long tutelage with living legend Pandit Jasraj. Ramnath is known for her versatility including for the spectacular music score of the Hollywood film 'Blood Diamond', her several collaborations with western music artists and earned recognition for her own album 'Miles from India' which was Grammy nominated. She is also the first Indian violinist to have been featured in the violin Bible, 'The Strad.'

Despite her forays into fusion and experimental music, her strong roots and true passion in Hindustani classical music was evident in her evening rendition of the opening piece which she described as the 'twilight raag', a Samyukth raag denoted as Suddh Varaali, an admixture of three unique raags, Marwa, Reva and Bibhas. She started her vilambit in a deeply self-meditative mood, unabashedly slow, but then building up to explode into pyrotechnics showing her extraordinary mastery of the instrument balancing between three raags dexterously, nevertheless producing a single garland of melody.

This is where the discerning fan crowd gasped and applauded repeatedly, especially with Banerjee shadowing her every step of the way and answering her through his tabla, syllable by syllable, to the crescendo. Banerjee proved that his tabla can be as much a 'gayaki' as the violin could be.

Banerjee is an illustrious percussion disciple of Pt Jnan Prakash Ghosh and has learned vocal music from Pt Ajoy Chakrabarty and violin from Ma Annapurna Devi. He has accompanied musical legends and traveled extensively. He is the founder of Dhvani established in India and North America. When Ramnath and Banerjee fused into a short piece on raag Des, there was melody and subtle emotions merging from both instruments, and when Ramnath followed that with a short dhun in Mishra kamaj, there was bubbly chirp, and the favorite Meera bhajan tuned in raag Bhairavi and popularized by her master Pt. Jasraj, brought to life the famous lyrics 'Mai Sanware Rang Rachi'.

The fans applauded generously but reluctantly got up at the conclusion of the concert.

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Education Council Holds Teachers Training

Over 90 balavihar teachers from the far flung centers of CMLA met on Sept 6 at Chinmaya Rameshwaram, prior to the opening of the current session.

As they trooped in, greeting each other with warm smiles, the teachers signed in to receive a name tag clearly identifying what grade they taught and at which center they offered their services. It proved to be an easy ice breaker for teachers who found quick talking points with peers engaged in the same grade levels.

The six member balavihar Education Council which had spearheaded the effort, were introduced to the teachers and the purpose of its formation explained. Senior teachers from the various centers were invited by the EC to make presentations on topics of relevance: chanting, how to make a class interesting, curriculum, how to do effective storytelling, etc.

Swamiji gave an introduction to Chinmaya Mission for the new teachers present and explained the Chinmaya Mission Pledge to all. Acharya Mahadevi also addressed the teachers about the purpose of balavihar and the importance of their role in a balavihar student's life.

Teachers confirmed that they were indeed helped by what they had heard and seen.

The EC to make it more relevant, is now holding grade specific training sessions for the teachers with Swamiji and Acharya Mahadevi who are addressing the topics that each grade will learn. EC members, playing the role of mentors, is then discussing the subjects further with the teachers.

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Role of a Guru and Significance of Guru Paduka Puja



In life, all of us are seeking happiness. Yet we are all suffering. Why? Is it not important to know? Is it something we can gain by our effort? Is it something we already have and don't know about? How can we know the Self? Adi Shankara says "When the *sadhaka* chooses the *atman* alone, the *atman* reveals itself." Further, the *Mukunda Mantra* says that a realized soul is one who achieves anything he thinks about – by mere *sankalpa* alone. Therefore, any *sadhaka* who wants liberation must worship a man of realization, a *Guru*.

It is only in Hinduism that we revere our *Guru*. The place of the *Guru* is considered higher than that of the Lord Himself. According to our scriptures, the *Guru* is none other than *paramatma*, the Supreme Self; but still has an individuality and a personality that attracts devotees and disciples towards him. He blesses them with knowledge and devotion. That disciple whom the *Guru* chooses, that disciple knows the *atman*. That seeker who has supreme devotion to the Lord and his *Guru*, to him alone the meaning of the *Upanishad* is revealed.

The *Guru* indicates the path of the Lord by protecting us from the five looters of *samsar* – our five sense organs. All that we have to do is surrender to the *Guru* – *guru charanaambuja nirbhara bhaktah*. For a *Guru* who teaches *Brahma Vidya*, the amount of *namaskars* be enough? To repay the debt of the *Guru* is a foolish attempt because we can never be free from this debt.

In the words of our Pujya Gurudev, Swami Chinmayananda "Just as the *Shiva Linga* represents Shiva and the *Saligrama* represents Vishnu, in the same way, the feet of the Teacher represents to the student not the feet, but the concept behind them. What you are invoking is Brahman the Lord. But we cannot directly go to Him. We want a symbol. At that time, there is no symbol more sacred than the feet of the Teacher. Therefore, we "borrow" the feet, not permanently. For some time the Teacher allows you to play with them. We wash them and worship them as though they were the Lord himself.

What we are invoking is as much my substratum as yours. The Teacher holds on to his Teacher's feet and thus the *Guru-Shishya-Parampara* is formed. You are not worshipping me. Don't miss the fact that you are invoking Him though the feet of the Teacher. I will be turning my mind to my Teacher. You are turning your mind to the Lord and the Teacher. This ritual is one of the most significant of rituals. When I am prostrating in reverence to my mother or father, I place my head at the feet. Why? The feet stand rooted in his or her love for me, in the sacrifices that he or she has made for me, something that I admire in him or her. That ideal I want to foster within me. It is symbolized in the prostration. I offer myself in surrender in order to invoke that great essence or quality in me."

The *Padukas* (or the sandals of the *Guru*) are just a revered as the *Guru's* feet. The *Guru* stands on the strength of His Knowledge. Thus, the sandals that He wears represent the Knowledge that he abides in. We show respect to the Knowledge and the one who imparts that Knowledge when we do a *Guru Paduka Puja*.

Let us all surrender at the feet of the lineage of *Gurus*; and offer our reverence and obeisance through the gesture of performing *Guru Paduka Puja*.

We urge you to host a *Paduka Puja* at your own home or at Rameshwaram Center. Swami Ishwaranandaji or Acharya Mahadevi will personally officiate the puja. Contact Rekha Acharya at rekhaacharya12@gmail.com or 714-749-0998 for requests to have Swamiji conduct the puja; or contact Priya Raghuram at priya.raghuram@yahoo.com for requests to have Mahadevanji conduct the puja.

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Valley Balavihar Opens New Session

The Valley balavihar opens its new 2014-15 session on September 7. The children and parents gathered at the Valley Hindu Temple, eager to begin another year of meaningful learning.



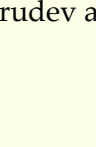
The hall sound reverberated with chants invoking the Lord of all new beginnings: Om Gam Ganapataye Namah and the *Guru Stotram*.

Teachers then spoke of the curriculum and how they planned to teach the children.

Coordinator Madhu Sharma spoke with reverence of Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda and his work, and Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayayanda who is taking the work and message of Gurudev forward. CMLA's Acharya Swami Ishwarananda, she told the gathering, is the torch bearer of CM activities in the area.

The first day at Valley balavihar concluded with Gurudev aarati and prasad for all.

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Many thanks for this issue to:

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